

LEIGH HUNT'S LONDON JOURNAL.

TO ASSIST THE ENQUIRING, ANIMATE THE STRUGGLING, AND SYMPATHIZE WITH ALL.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 1835.

No. 60.

PRICE THREE HALFPENCE.

CHAT WITH THE MAGAZINES.

WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS.

"It is allowed on all hands, now, that there are no sonnets in any language comparable with Wordsworth's. Even Milton must yield the palm. He has written but about a dozen or so, Wordsworth some hundreds—and though nothing can surpass 'the inspired grandeur of that on the Piedmontese Massacre, the tenderness of those on his Blindness and on his Deceased Wife, the grave dignity of that to a Young Lady, or the cheerful and attic grace of those to Lawrence and Cyriac Skinner,' as is finely said by the writer of an article in the 'Edinburgh Review' on Glassford's 'Lyrical Translations,' yet many of Wordsworth's equal even these—and the long and splendid array of his sonnets—deploying before us in series after series—astonishes us by the proof it affords of the inexhaustible riches of his imaginative genius and his moral wisdom. One series on the river Duddon—two series dedicated to Liberty—three series on our Ecclesiastical History—miscellaneous sonnets in multitudes—and those last poured forth as clear, and bright, and strong, as the first that issued from the sacred spring!"—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

Most true is this. Wordsworth's untired exuberance is indeed astonishing; though it becomes a little less so, when we consider that his genius has been fortunate in a long life of leisure, his opinions not having rendered it necessary to him to fight with difficulties, and daily cares, and hostile ascendancies, as Milton's did,

"Expos'd to daily fraud, contempt, and wrong,

With darkness and with dangers compass'd round."

In that condition sat the great blind epic poet; and after having performed an active as well as contemplative part for his earthly sojourn, still combined action with contemplation in a mighty narrative, and built the adamantine gates of another world. In no invidious regard for one great poet against another do we say it; but in justice to fame itself, and in the sincerest reverence of admiration for both. With the exception of Shakespeare (who included everybody), Wordsworth has proved himself the greatest contemplative poet this country has produced. His facility is wonderful. He never wants the fittest words for the finest thoughts. He can express, at will, those innumerable shades of feeling which most other writers, not unworthy too, in their degree, of the name of poets, either dismiss at once as inexpressible, or find so difficult of embodiment, as to be content with shaping them forth but seldom, and reposing from their labours. And rhyme, instead of a hindrance, appears to be a positive help. It serves to concentrate his thoughts, and make them closer and more precious. Milton did not pour forth sonnets in this manner,—poems in hundreds of little channels,—all solid and fluent gold. No; but he was venting himself, instead, in 'Paradise Lost.' 'Paradise Lost,' if the two poets are to be compared, is the set-off against Wordsworth's achievement in sonnet-writing. There is the 'Excursion,' to be sure; but the 'Excursion' is made up of the same purely contemplative matter. It is a long-drawn song of the nightingale; as the sonnets are its briefer warbles. There is no eagle-flight in the 'Excursion;' no sustinment of a

mighty action; no enormous hero, bearing on his wings the weight of a lost eternity, and holding on, nevertheless, undismayed, —firm-visaged through faltering chaos,—the combatant of all chance and all power,—a vision that, if he could be seen now, would be seen in the sky like a comet, remaining, though speeding,—visible for long nights, though rapidly voyaging,—a sight for a universe,—an actor on the stage of infinity. There is no such robust and majestic work as this in Wordsworth. Compared with Milton he is but as a dreamer on the grass, though a divine one, and worthy to be compared as a younger, a more fluent-speeched, but less potent brother, whose business it is to talk and think, and gather together his flocks of sonnets like sheep, (beauteous as clouds in heaven) while the other is abroad, more actively moving the world, with contemplations that take the shape of events. There are many points of resemblance between Wordsworth and Milton. They are both serious men; both in earnest; both maintainers of the dignity of poetry in life and doctrine; and both are liable to some objections on the score of sectarianism, and narrow theological views. But Milton widened these as he grew old; and Wordsworth, assisted by the advancing light of the times (for the greatest minds are seldom as great as the whole instinctive mind of society), cannot help conceding or qualifying certain views of his own, though timidly, and with fear of a certain few, such as Milton never feared. Milton, however, was never weak in his creed, whatever it was; he forced it into width enough to embrace all place and time, future as well as present. Wordsworth would fain dwindle down the possibilities of heaven and earth within the views of a Church-of-England establishment. And he is almost intirely a retrospective poet. The vast future frightens him, and he would fain believe that it is to exist only in a past shape, and that shape something very like one of the smallest of [the present, with a vestry for the golden church of the New Jerusalem, and beadles for the "limitary cherubs." Now, we hope and believe, that the very best of the past will merge into the future,—how long before it be superseded by a still better, we cannot say. And we own that we can conceive of nothing better than some things which already exist, in venerable as well as lovely shapes. But how shall we pretend to limit the vast flood of coming events, or have such little faith in nature, providence, and the enlightened co-operation of humanity, as to suppose that it will not adjust itself in the noblest and best manner? In this respect, and in some others, Mr Wordsworth's poetry wants universality. He calls upon us to sympathise with his churches and his country flowers, and his blisses of solitude; and he calls well; but he wants one of the best parts of persuasion; he is not reciprocal; he does not sufficiently sympathise with our towns, and our blisses of society, and our reformations of churches (the consequences, after all, of his own. What would he not have said, by the by, in behalf of Popery, had he lived before a Reformation!) And it may be said of him, as Johnson said of Milton's 'Allegro' and 'Penseroso,' that "no mirth indeed can be found in his melancholy," but it is to be feared there is always "some melancholy in his mirth." His muse invites us to the treasures of his retirement in beautiful, noble, and inexhaustible language; but she does

it, after all, rather like a teacher than a persuader, and fails in impressing upon us the last and best argument, that she herself is happy. Happy she must be, it is true, in many senses; for she is happy in the sense of power, happy in the sense of a good intention, happy in fame, in words, in the consciousness of immortal poetry; yet there she is, after all, not quite persuasive,—more rich in the means than the ends,—with something of a puritan austerity upon her,—more stately than satisfactory,—wanting in animal spirits, in perfect and hearty sympathy with our pleasures, and her own. A vaporous melancholy hangs over his most beautiful landscapes. He seems always girding himself up for his pilgrimage of joy, rather than enjoying it; and his announcements are in a tone too exemplary and didactic; we admire him; we venerate him; we would fain agree with him; but we feel something wanting on his own part towards the largeness and healthiness of our own united experiences; and we resent, for his sake as well as ours, that he should insist upon squaring all which is to come, in the interminable future, with the visions that bound a college-cap. We feel that it will hurt the effect of his genius with posterity, and make the most admiring of his readers in the third and fourth generation, lament over his narrowness. In short, his poetry is the sunset to the English church,—beautiful as the real sunset "with evening beam," gorgeous, melancholy, retrospective, giving a new and divine light to the lowliest flowers, and setting the pinnacles of the churches golden in the heavens. Yet nothing but a sunset and a retrospection it is. A new and great day is coming,—diviner still, we believe,—larger, more universal, more equable, showing (manifestly) the heavens more just, and making mankind more truly religious, because more cheerful and grateful.

The Editor of 'Blackwood' justly prides himself on having appreciated this noble poet from the first; but it is a pity, we think, that he looks back in anger upon those whose literary educations were less fortunate;—who had been brought up in schools of a different taste; and who showed, after all, a natural strength of taste singularly honourable to them, in being able to appreciate real poetry at last, even in quarters to which the editor himself, we believe, has never yet done justice, though no man could do it better. For Wilson's prose (and we could not express our admiration of it more highly) might stretch forth its thick and rich territory by the side of Keats's poetry, like a land of congenial exuberance,—a forest tempest-tost indeed, compared with those still vallies and enchanted gardens, but set in the same identical region of the remote, the luxuriant, the mythological,—governed by a more wilful and scornful spirit, but such as hates only from an inverted principle of the loving, impatient of want of sympathy, and incapable, in the last resort, of denying the beautiful where-soever existing, because thereby it would deny the divine part of itself. Why should Christopher North revert to the errors of his critical brethren in past times, seeing that they are all now agreed, and that every one of them perhaps has something to forgive himself in his old judgments (ourselves assuredly not excepted,—if we may be allowed to name ourselves among them)? Men got angry from political differences, and were not in a temper to give dispassionate poetical judgments. And yet Wordsworth had some of his greatest praises from his severest politi-

cal opponents (Hazlitt, for instance); and out of the former Scotch school of criticism, which was a French one, or that of Pope and Boileau, came the first hearty acknowledgment of the merits of Keats, for whom we were delighted the other day to find that an enthusiastic admiration is retained by the chief of that school (Jeffrey), whose natural taste has long had the rare honour of triumphing over his educational one, and who ought, we think, now that he is *Lord of Session*, to follow, at his leisure moments, the example set him by the most accomplished of all national benches of judicature, and give us a book that should beat, nevertheless, all the Kameses and Woodhouseleys before him; as it assuredly would.

RABELAIS.

"The chronicler of Gargantua possessed, doubtless, a very extensive, though perplexed and ill-assorted, stock of learning, and this unworthy member of the Franciscan order was endowed with a keen perception of the vices and follies of his age; but he appears not to respect himself, and his reader can have no sort of personal esteem for an author of his description. So much profane and ribbald merriment, which would be scandalous in a layman, becomes insufferable in an ecclesiastic; and though occasionally some amusement may be found amid the effusions of his exuberant imagination, and the audacious oddity of his conceits, disgust and loathing quickly supervene at the constant obtrusion of cynicism and incency."—*From an article, intitled 'The Days of Erasmus,' in 'Fraser's Magazine.'*

We remember, when first we took up Rabelais, (in the admirable translation of Urquhart and others) we thought, on reading the exordium, that we had found a man to be delighted with and laugh with, for ever. We had no sooner read a little way,—no further than the second chapter, we think,—when horrible disgust seized us, and we felt inclined to throw the book a mile off. Divers philosophical cogitations on times and manners, &c. enabled us to resume the volume; and now and then, amidst a heap of unintelligible stuff (doubtless, however, with a meaning in it for his contemporaries, if only as a blind [of buffoonery], our transport at his wit and satire was renewed. His court of law, with the intentional jargon on all sides, cannot be surpassed. Panurge, Gargantua, &c. are immortal names for some of the weaknesses of men and their customs. His eating and drinking are prodigious,—as good as if Hunger and Thirst personified sate down to a feast of revelry, with Wit for their host. And his lists! his very vocabularies! He goes on, giving item after item, till the very continuity of the joke makes us believe there must be something wonderful in it, and the laughter runs over with the full measure. But we spoke of him in this place, chiefly to express our pleasure at the above criticism upon him in 'Fraser,' and to take the opportunity of thanking the Editor of that Magazine for the very kind mention he has made of us, in a note to the article from which it is taken. We have not forgotten a former kindness (when a book of ours was noticed some years ago); and had we seen it at the time, should have been impelled to make a like acknowledgment. But circumstances led us to fancy, that the editor and his fellow-writers, who pour forth such a profusion of quips and cranks and merry scholarship, like some jovial brotherhood on the banks of the Rhine, really had no serious regard for anything, nor were at all disposed to criticise such men as Rabelais in the style of the above paragraph. We beg pardon for our error, and are proud to have moved a grave corner in the hearts of men of so much wit and learning. That they should have thought of ourselves, or of anything we have written, in conjunction with the remembrance of such a man as Erasmus, does not beget in us any presumptuous self-confidence, or lessen our sense of distance from that venerable name. We know how a kind feeling is apt to overflow in its words, and certainly do not value it the less on that account, nor ourselves the more, except as inciters to that kindness (for which we will take full credit). We differ extremely with 'Fraser' in some of its judgments of our contemporaries; but those are part of a political warfare, in

which, in our time, we have had our full share both of the "give and take;" and far be it from us, therefore, on every account, to quarrel with anybody during a struggle, for heats and prejudices, as long as they entertain a serious regard for anything, or for anybody else. This is our only stipulation with anyone, for the sake of being able to keep up the common feelings of humanity with him: and we should not stipulate even this, if we thought that he or society could be happy without it, or fair play exist between the pains and pleasures of all. Is it vanity in the shape of modesty that induces us to say this? or a poor wretched ostentation of any sort? Oh no, no. It is suffering and its experiences;—it is that which has made us think at all, and which has left us our power to enjoy whatsoever happiness is within our reach, purely, and for no other reason upon earth but because we have good intentions and wish everybody well. If adversity could benefit everybody else, in this respect, as it has benefited us, we could wish that all mankind were sorrowful half their lives, that they might be happy for the other half. But the mystery of trouble is not to be settled in this manner; and many have all their sorrows heaviest as they grow old. Thank God, evil is not to be compared in general amount with good; nor does it seem that so much of it need be necessary, as the world grows wiser. The means of good are infinite. Good heavens! what heaps lie about us, of which we take little or no heed; and yet we cannot think that they are everlastingly to be wasted.—But we shall be travelling out of the record. Many thanks to "Oliver Yorke," and to all such as have any faith in anything good, particularly to the lovers of books and their humanities; and may the wine of their good-will make them as happy, as their attic salt makes them pleasant and famous.

BIRDS AND CAGES.

"*Cage Birds; their Natural History, Management, Habits, Food, Diseases, Treatment, Breeding, and the Methods of catching them.* By J. Bechstein, M.D.

"Dr Bechstein loves birds as a Turk loves women; and shows his affection by the accommodations of his seraglio. He is very severe upon amateurs who allow their birds to become diseased from the dirtiness of their cages. 'We love birds they say.' 'No,' I reply; 'you love yourselves, not them, if you neglect to keep them clean.' O! Doctor, Doctor! *de te fabula narratur.* If you do not love yourself much better than the birds, why all this catching and caging? Why that precious remark that, although all birds are less at ease in a cage than in a room, yet that some 'never sing unless confined within narrow limits, being obliged, as it would appear, to solace themselves for the want of liberty with their song.' We could find in our hearts to cage the Doctor, that he might solace himself for his want of liberty by writing books for our amusement. 'Those that are confined, that we may the better enjoy the beauty of their song, should have a cage proportioned to their natural vivacity: a lark, for example, requires a larger cage than a chaffinch.' We should think so. What sized cage would be proportioned to the author's natural vivacity? 'In the account of each bird I shall point out what shaped cage I have found most suitable.' So he does, but it does not accord with our experience. For most kinds, the best shaped cage is one open at the sides, except a few tree tops, a flat or undulating green bottom, a blue curved roof, or darker coloured with bright spangles for nightingales, which may be changed for a large spirit lamp for larks. The same cage does for both species, or any others. There is nothing like it, and it may be had, gratis, of the maker. Although unable to get over the primary abomination of bird-fancying, we cannot but be interested in the many curious details of this book; and while we would have no more catching, we must say that great advantage would accrue to all which are already caught, from Dr Bechstein's directions about food and general treatment."—*Monthly Repository.*

This is a capital bit of review, and "turning of the tables." In nothing is the effect of education, for good or evil, more remarkably shown, than in the

power which it gives to minds otherwise benevolent and reflecting, to stop short of conclusions obvious to other people. The most startling thing we ever heard said in defence of keeping a bird in a cage, was by an acquaintance of ours in a morbid state of suffering,—a very good, and kind, and thinking man, but exasperated by diseased blood. "God keeps me in a cage," said he; "why shouldn't I keep a bird?" The answer, however, was clear enough. God knows well what he does; he is sure of the end, and therefore justifies the means. But he has not furnished men with a like certainty. If we took upon ourselves to act on that principle, what would be the end of it? and what our evils meanwhile? Our only sure refuge would be want of feeling; and then, at best, what becomes of our pleasures? The only real puzzle in these questions between man and the inferior creation is, how far will they add to, or only vary, the stock of pain, by thinking too much of it, and transferring the suffering from physical to moral? But then comes Duty to cut the knot; and Duty says,—If there is to be pain at all, let me endure it and ennoble it: I must entertain [the question; Knowledge and I must become cognizant of it;—if it must end in pain somehow, let the pain have the pleasure of exaltation, and kindness, and majestic necessity. Furthermore, let us take care of health, and all pains may be well borne.

CHURCH-YARDS AND THEIR STORIES.

[FROM 'Legends and Scenes of the North of Scotland and Traditional History of Cromarty, by Hugh Miller;—a highly amusing and interesting book, written by a remarkable man, who will infallibly be well known. We have selected our first extract of it, not only on account of the merits of the passage, and the sample it affords of the style, variety, and entertainment of the work, but because it furnishes us with some account of the author. He is 'Old Mortality' come to life again in a younger and nobler shape; but his own pages will rescue the designation from its applicability. Mr Miller, it seems, is, or has been, a common stone-mason, and itinerant architect of tombs; and 'from cogitation in those shades' he has issued forth a writer, of pretensions that would have been little expected from such a beginning, though (singularly enough—unless it is an Irishism to say so) not without its special precedent in this remarkable age; for Mr Allan Cunningham was of the same trade. But Mr Miller, besides a poetical imagination, though not yet exhibited in verse, has great depth of reflection; and his style is so choice, pregnant, and exceedingly like an educated one, that if itself betrays it in any respect to be otherwise, it is by that very excess; as Theophrastus was known not to have been born in Attica, by his too Attic nicety. We differ with one or two of the author's moral and theological conclusions, but with great respect for his right of judgment and his general liberality. We have read the volume through with the greatest pleasure, as the Reader will see by various extracts that we propose to make from it, and we earnestly exhort Mr Miller to set about making the second volume, of which he gives us hopes; for we are sure the public will call for it.]

WERE I to see a person determined on becoming a hermit, through a disgust of that tame aspect of manners and low tone of feeling which seem the characteristics of what is termed civilized society, I would advise him, instead of retiring into a desert, to take up his place of residence in a country church-yard. Mere solitude cannot surely separate one's thoughts from one's experience; on the contrary, it will only lead one to think the more of it; for the less a man has to engage him in the present, the more will he

live in the past. And, besides, from the very constitution of our nature, what we have seen and felt on any occasion, will be remembered all the more vividly if the sight was hateful or unpleasant to us, and the feeling one of pain. What has annoyed and disgusted us in the city will haunt us in the desert. But though it be thus impossible for us to shut our eyes on the society of men, it is quite in our power, by changing our place of observation, to view the denizens of this society in a different phasis; and I am of opinion that their aspect appears nowhere more interesting than when viewed from a country church-yard. The field of graves is a place quite beyond the precincts of the monotonous every-day world; its more interesting visitors do not seem the people of common every-day life. Grief, like love, is a credulous passion; its thoughts and language are the thoughts and language of poetry; its saddest realities glow with the hues of romance; it lives in a world of its own, peopled with hopes and fears which have become spiritual existences; and, while it imparts the splendours of Elysium to the scenes of the past, and the gloom of Tartarus to those of the future, it thinks, amid its tears, of a far different future, which has become the present to those whom it mourns, and in which the enjoyments of the past are more than doubled. What wonder then that the more interesting visitors of the church-yard should seem a different class of beings from the people of common life. Instead of hearing them inquire in the manner of the modern Sadducee, whether there be angel or spirit, we see, that not only do they believe in the separate existence of the soul, but also, in many instances, in what is told of its occasional visits from the world of the departed to the world of men. Instead of being compelled to hate them for their apathy and indifference, we find that they are susceptible of grief, and have been softened by bereavement into tenderness and sympathy.—by the sadness of the countenance, says Solomon, the heart is made better. Instead of having to deplore their low scorn of religion, we perceive that their only hope and solace is in accordance to its sanction. What is still better, we find a reciprocity of feeling awakened in ourselves. Without having recourse to the phantasies of poetry, we are transported to the regions of romance; without imagining anything higher of our brethren of mankind than is really to be found among them, our better sympathies are awakened in their behalf; without abstracting ourselves from the influence of example we are incited to the practice of virtue.

There is no personage of real life who can be more properly regarded as a hermit of the church-yard than the itinerant sculptor, who wanders from one country burying-ground to another, recording on his tablets of stone the tears of the living, and the worth of the dead. If possessed of a common portion of feeling and imagination, he cannot fail of deeming his profession a school of benevolence and poetry. For my own part, I have seldom thrown aside the hammer and trowel of the stone mason, for the chisel of the itinerant sculptor, without receiving some fresh confirmation of the opinion. How often have I suffered my mallet to rest on the unfinished epitaph, when listening to some friend of the buried expatiating with all the eloquence of grief on the mysterious warning, and the sad death-bed, on the worth that had departed, and the sorrow that remained behind! How often, forgetting that I was merely an auditor, have I so identified myself with the mourner, as to feel my heart swell, and my eyes becoming moist! Even the very aspect of a solitary church-yard seems conducive to habits of thought and feeling. *I have risen from my employment to mark the shadow of tombstone and burial mound creeping over the sward at my feet, and have been rendered serious by the reflection, that as those gnomons of the dead marked out no line of hours, though the hours passed as the shadows moved, so, in that eternity in which even the dead exist, there is a nameless tide of continuity, but no division of time.* I have become sad, when looking on the green mounds around me, I have regarded them as waves of triumph which time and death had rolled over the wreck of man; and the

feeling has been deepened, when looking down with the eye of imagination through this motionless sea of graves, I have marked the sad remains of both the long departed, and the recent dead, thickly strewn over the bottom.—I have grieved above the half-soiled shroud of her for whom the tears of bereavement had not yet been dried up, and sighed over the mouldering bones of him whose very name had long since perished from the earth.

Not long ago I wrought for about a week in the burying ground of Kirk Michael, a ruinous chapel in the eastern extremity of the parish of Resolis, and distant about six miles from the town of Cromarty. It is a pleasant solitary spot, lying on the sweep of a gentle declivity. The sea flows to within a few yards of the lower wall, but the beach is so level, and so little exposed to the winds, that even in the time of tempest there is heard within its precincts only a faint rippling murmur, scarcely loud enough to awaken the echoes of the ruin. *Ocean seems to muffle his waves in approaching this field of the dead.* A row of elms springs out of the fence, and half encircles the building in the centre. Standing beside the mouldering walls of the latter, the foreground of the scene appears thickly sprinkled over with graves and tablets; and we see the green moss creeping round the rude sculptures of a primitive age, imparting lightness and beauty to that on which the chisel had bestowed quite an opposite character. The flake-like leaves and gnarled trunks of the elms fill up what a painter would term the midground of the picture; and seen from between the boughs, the bay of Cromarty, shut in by the Sutors, so as to present the appearance of a huge lake, and the town beyond half enveloped in blue smoke,—the windows sparkling through the cloud like spangles on a belt of azure, occupy the distance.

The western gable of the ruin is still intire, though the very foundations of part of the walls can no longer be traced on the sward, and it is topped by a belfrey of hewn stone, in which the *dead bell* is still suspended. From the spires and balls with which the cornice is surmounted, the moss and lichens which bristle over the mouldings, and the stalks of ragweed which shoot out here and there from between the joints, the belfrey, though designed in a barbarous style of architecture, is rich in the true picturesque. It furnished me, when the wind blew from the east, with an agreeable music, not, indeed, either gay or very varied, but of a character which suited well with that of the place. I wrought directly under it, and frequently paused in my labours to hearken to the blast moaning amid its spires, and whistling through its apertures; and have occasionally been startled by the mingling death-like tones produced by the hammer, when forced by the wind against the sides of the bell. I was one day listening to this music, when, by one of those freaks which fling the light of recollection upon the dark recesses of the past, *much in the manner that I have seen a child throwing the gleam of a mirror from the sunshine into the shade,* there were brought before me the circumstances of a dream, deemed prophetic of the death of him whose epitaph I was then inscribing. It was one of those auguries of contingency which, according to Bacon, men mark when they hit, and never mark when they miss.

In the latter part of 1822, a young lad, a mason's apprentice, was employed with his master in working within the policies of Pointzfield,—a gentleman's seat about a mile from the burying-ground. He wished much to visit the tombs and chapel, but could find no opportunity, for the day had so shortened that his employments engaged him from the first peep of light in the morning, until half an hour after sunset. And perhaps the wish was the occasion of the dream. He had no sooner fallen asleep, after the fatigues of the day, than he found himself approaching the chapel, as he thought, in one of the finest of midsummer evenings. The whole western heavens were suffused with the blush of sunset,—the hills, the woods, the fields, the sea, all the limbs and members of the great frame of nature seemed enveloped in a mantle of beauty. He reached the burying-

ground, and deemed it the loveliest spot he had ever seen. The tombs were finished after the most exquisite designs, chastely Grecian, or rich Gothic; and myriads of flowering shrubs winded around the urns, and shaded the tablets in every disposition of beauty. There was a profusion of roses, mingled with large spreading flowers of a vivid blue. The building seemed intire, but it was so encrusted with moss and lichens as to present an appearance of extreme antiquity; on the western gable there was fixed a huge gnomon of bronze. Suddenly a low breeze began to moan through the shrubs and bushes, the heavens became overcast, and the dreamer, turning towards the building, with a sensation of fear, beheld the gnomon revolving slowly as on an axis, until the point rested on the sward. He fled the place, and when floundering on in darkness and terror, as he thought, through a morass that stretches beyond the southern wall of the chapel, he awoke. Only five weeks elapsed from the evening of his dream, until he followed to this burying-ground the corpse of a relative, and saw that the open grave occupied the identical spot on which the point of the gnomon had rested.

During the course of the week which I spent in the burying-ground, I became acquainted with several interesting traditions connected with its inhabitants. There are some of these which show how very unlike the beliefs entertained in the ages which have departed, are to those deemed rational in the present; others which render it evident that though men at different eras think and believe differently, human nature always remains the same. The following partakes in part of the character of both.

There lived, about a century ago, in the upper part of the parish of Cromarty, an elderly female of that disposition of mind which Bacon describes as one of the very errors of human nature. Her faculties of enjoyment and suffering seemed connected by some invisible tie to the fortunes of her neighbours; but this tie, unlike that of sympathy, which binds pleasure to pleasure, and sorrow to sorrow, by a strange perversity united to each other the opposite feelings. She was happy when the people around her were unfortunate, and miserable when they prospered. So decided a misanthropy was met by a kindred feeling in those acquainted with her; nor was she regarded with only that abhorrence which attaches to the evil wish, and the malignant intention, but also with the contempt due to that impotency of malice which can only wish and intend.

Her sphere of mischief, however, though limited by her circumstances, was occupied to its utmost boundary; and she frequently made up for her want of power by an ingenuity, derived from what seemed in her an almost instinctive knowledge of the weaknesses of human nature. It was difficult to tell how she effected her schemes, but certain it was that in her neighbourhood lovers became estranged, and families divided. Late in the autumn of her last year, she formed one of a band of reapers employed in cutting down the crops of a Cromarty farmer. Her partner on the ridge was a poor widow, who had recently lost her husband, and who, though wasted by grief and sickness, was now toiling for her three helpless orphans. Every person on the field pitied her but one; and the malice of even that one, perverted as her dispositions were, would, probably, have been disarmed by the helplessness of its object, had it not chanced, that, about five years before, when the poor woman and her deceased husband were on the eve of their marriage, she had attempted to break off the match, by casting some foul aspersions on her character. Those whom the wicked injure, says the adage, they never forgive; and with a demoniac abuse of her knowledge of the dispositions of the people with whom she wrought, she strained beyond her strength to get a-head of them, knowing that a competition would necessarily take place, in which, she trusted, the widow would either have to relinquish her employment, as above her strength, or so exhaust herself in the contest as to relapse into sickness. The expected struggle ensued, but, to the surprise of everyone, the widow kept up

her place in the foremost rank until evening, when she appeared less fatigued than almost any of the party. The wretch who had occasioned it, and who had fallen behind all the others, seemed dreadfully agitated for the last two last hours it continued; and she was heard by the persons who bound up the sheaves, muttering, the whole time, words, apparently, of fearful meaning, which, however, were drowned amid the rustling of the corn, and the hurry and confusion of the competition. Next morning she alone of all the reapers was absent; and she was found by the widow, who seemed the only one solicitous to know what had become of her, and who first entered her hovel to inquire after her, tossing in the delirium of a fever. The poor woman, though shocked and terrified by her ravings, and her agony, tended her till within half an hour of midnight, when she expired.

At that late hour a solitary traveller was passing the road which winds along the southern shore of the bay. The moon, in her last quarter, had just risen over the hill on her right, and, half veiled by three strips of cloud, rather resembled a heap of ignited charcoal seen through the bars of a grate, than the orb which only a few nights before had enabled the reaper to prosecute his employments until near morning. The blocks of granite scattered over the neighbouring beach, and bleached and polished by the waves, were relieved by the moonshine, and resembled flocks of sheep ruminating on a meadow; but not a single ray rested on the sea beyond, or the path or fields before;—the beam slid ineffectually along the level;—it was light looking at darkness. On a sudden, the traveller became conscious of that strange mysterious emotion which, according to the creed of the demonologist, indicates the presence or near approach of an evil spirit. He felt his whole frame as if creeping together and his hair bristling on his head, and, filled with a strange horror, he heard, through the dead stillness of the night, a faint, uncertain noise, like that of a sudden breeze rustling through a wood at the close of autumn. He blessed himself, and stood still. A tall figure, indistinct in the darkness, came gliding along the road from the east, and inquired of him, as it floated past, in a voice hollow and agitated, whether it could not reach Kirk-Michael before midnight? "No living person could," answered the traveller; and the appearance, groaning in reply, was out of sight in a moment. The sounds still continued as if a multitude of leaves were falling from the boughs of a forest, and striking with a pattering sound on the heaps congregated beneath, when another figure came up, taller, but even less distinct than the former. It bore the appearance of a man on horseback.—"Shall I reach Kirk-Michael before midnight?" was the query again put to the terrified traveller; but before he could reply to it the appearance had vanished in the distance; and a shriek of torment and despair, which seemed re-echoed by the very firmament, roused him into a more intense feeling of horror. The moon shone out with supernatural brightness; the noise, which had ceased for a moment, returned, but the sounds were different, for they now seemed to be those of faint laughers, and low indistinct mutterings, in the tone of ridicule, and the gigantic rider of a pale horse, with the appearance of a female bent double before him, and accompanied by two dogs, one of which tugged at the head, and the other at the feet of the appearance, was seen approaching from the west. As this terrible apparition passed the traveller, the moon shone full on the face of the figure on the horse, and he distinctly perceived, though the features seemed convulsed with agony, that they were those of the female who, unknown to him, had expired a few minutes before.

A REAL FAVOURITE.

Such was the estimation in which Paesello's opera, 'La Frascatana,' was held in Italy, that I have been told it was always brought forward on the failure of any new one, as sure to appease a dissatisfied audience.

—Lord Mount-Edgcumbe's Musical Reminiscences.

LODOR.

THE NEW NOVEL BY MRS SHELLEY.

[We extract two portraits from Mrs Shelley's work, one of a passive, plump, smiling old maid (capitally well drawn), who cannot be unhappy or unforgiving if she would, so well has the happy mediocrity of her character profited by a long country life,—the other of an active young female philosopher, the creature of thought, adversity, and good-heartedness, and firm without being masculine.]

Wuoso had heard the good lady talk of endless tears and mournings for the loss of Lodore, of life not worth having when he was gone, of the sad desolation of their position, and looked at her face beaming with satisfaction, with only so much sensibility painted there as to render it expressive of all that is kind and compassionate, good humour in her frequent smiles, and sleek content in her plump person, might have laughed at the contrast, and yet have pondered on the strange riddle we human beings present, and how contradictions accord in our singular machinery. This good aunt was incapable of affectation, and all was true and real that she said. She lived upon the idea of her brother; he was all in all to her; but they had been divided so long, that his death scarcely increased the separation; and she could talk of meeting him in heaven, with as firm and as cheerful a faith, as a few months before she had anticipated his return to England.

"I lost (said Fanny) my guide, preserver, my guardian angel, when my father died. Nothing remains but the philosophy which he taught me—the disdain of low-thoughted care which he sedulously cultivated: this, joined to my cherished independence, which my disposition renders necessary to me."

"And thus you foster sorrow, and waste your life in vain regret?"

"Pardon me! I do not waste my life," replied Fanny, with her sunny smile; "nor am I unhappy: far otherwise. An ardent thirst for knowledge is as the air I breathe, and the acquisition of it is pure and unalloyed happiness. I aspire to be useful to my fellow-creatures; but that is a consideration for the future, when fortune shall smile on me. Now I have but one passion: it swallows up every other, it dwells with my darling books, and is fed by the treasures of beauty and wisdom which they contain."

Ethel could not understand. Fanny continued: "I aspire to be useful; sometimes I think I am—once I know I was. I was my father's almoner."

"We lived in a district where there was a great deal of distress, and a great deal of oppression. We had no money to give, but I soon found that determination and earnestness will do much. It was my father's lesson, that I should never fear anything but myself. He taught me to penetrate, to anatomize, to purify my motives; but, once assured of my own integrity, to be afraid of nothing. Words have more power than anyone can guess; it is by words that the world's great fight, now in the civilized times, is carried on; I never hesitated to use them when I fought any battle for the miserable and oppressed. People are so afraid to speak, it would seem as if half our fellow-creatures were born with deficient organs; like parrots they can repeat a lesson, but their voice fails them when that alone is wanting to make the tyrant quail."

As Fanny spoke her blue eyes brightened, and a smile irradiated her face. These were all the tokens of enthusiasm she displayed; yet her words moved Ethel strangely, and she looked on her with wonder as a superior being. Her youth gave grace to her sentiments, and were an assurance of their sincerity. She continued:—

"I am becoming flighty, as my mother calls it; but, as I spoke, many scenes of cottage distress passed through my memory when, holding my father's hand, I witnessed his endeavours to relieve the poor. That is all over now—he is gone; but I have one consolation—that of endeavouring to render myself worthy to rejoin him in a better world. It is this hope

that impells me continually, and without any flagging of spirit, to cultivate my understanding and to refine it. Oh, what has this life to give, as worldlings describe it, worth one of those glorious emotions which raise me from this petty sphere into the sun-bright regions of mind which my father inhabits! I am rewarded, even here, by the elevated feelings which the authors whom I love so passionately inspire; while I converse each day with Plato, and Cicero, and Epictetus, the world, as it is, passes from before me like a vain shadow."

These enthusiastic words were spoken with so calm a manner, and in so equable a voice, that there seemed nothing strange nor exaggerated in them. It is vanity and affectation that shock, or any manifestation of feeling not in accordance with the real character. But while we follow our natural bent, and only speak that which our minds spontaneously inspire, there is a harmony which, however novel, is never grating.

[This is admirable, and so is the pervading spirit of the work. Its object is to soften the heart by self-reflection, and render it fit soil for those beautiful flowers of patience and cultivated feeling, always as ready to spring up under certain views of nature and the universe, as new plants are to make their appearance in a ground freshly turned up to the sun.]

TIGHT LACING.

To the Editor of the London Journal.

SIR,—Your late observations on 'Female Beauty' convince me, that in you the fair sex have an able champion and discerning admirer. This emboldens me to hope that you will not refuse to give publicity, by means of your much-read Journal, to a few remarks on the odious and dangerous custom, so long and so extensively adopted in this country, of encasing the fair and noble forms of our females in tightly-laced stays—a practice to which their appearance, and (what is of so much more importance) their health, is but too often sacrificed. I am aware that this subject is considered by many to be so purely professional, as not to come within the province of a Journal like yours to discuss; but so anxious am I that a few of the most glaring evils of the system should be widely and extensively exposed, that I have trespassed on your time by stating them. Our medical periodicals circulate so exclusively amongst medical men, that it would be in vain to appeal to the public through those channels. If these remarks should be the means of inciting other and more able pens than mine to the work of reformation, my object will be attained. We have been so long accustomed to see females of all but the most tender age wearing stays, that we are apt to consider them indispensable and things of course; and I am well aware that the proposal to abolish them altogether will be considered by many as absolutely preposterous. I was talking, a few days ago, to a lady on this subject, and observed that stays were both hurtful and unnecessary; "But, my dear sir," said she, "I should be no figure at all without them." Now this is the very point on which so much delusion prevails. A small waist is considered by, I will say, the majority of persons as the only essential to a good figure. Graceful carriage, a finely-turned bust, symmetry and harmony of proportion, are either not understood or are overlooked. Hence all that screwing, and twisting, and torturing, to which the pliant form of many a fair young creature is condemned; and hence the pale look, the narrow chest, and tottering walk, which all observe, but so few attribute to the true cause.

The cavity of the chest is destined to receive the most important vital parts—the heart, the lungs, &c. If, then, this cavity be compressed, as it is by stays, it of course follows that impediment to their due action is the inevitable result. We are accustomed to hear the Chinese ridiculed for the manner in which they confine and distort the feet of their women. I have seen just as much deformity of the chest result from tight-lacing, in this country, as could possibly be produced on the feet by pressure such as I have mentioned. The ancients, who had

so acute a perception of the beautiful, and the remains of whose sculpture are still referred to as models of excellence, may be quoted on this point. Compare the form of the Venus de Medici with that of a modern belle. Where do we find in the former the wasp-like distortion of waist, the stiff, constrained attitude, and narrow chest of the latter? No, all is free, graceful, and flowing; and such perfection may be still seen among savage nations, but may in vain be looked for among those who call themselves civilized. The last and fairest of the Almighty's creations is doomed to be marred by the hands of the mantua-maker. How long is this state of things to exist?—how much longer are we to boast of our refinement, and yet remain inferior to the most savage tribes in attention to health and elegance? Most probably, until some leader of fashion shall set the example; when it will be followed by the rest of the world, who will then look back with astonishment at the folly of their previous system, and wonder that people could ever be found so insane as to sacrifice everything to a false standard of beauty. It is too much to expect that a person, who has all her life been accustomed to the support of stays can at once leave them off altogether. Use is second nature; and that which was at first painful pressure has become, by long custom, a necessary support. But it is in behalf of the rising generation that I would plead. Strengthen their young bodies by nutritious food and plentiful exercise in the open air, and nature, thus assisted, not thwarted, will bring them to a vigorous maturity.—I am, Sir,

Your constant Reader,

London, May 4th.

MEDICUS.

THEORY OF DREAMING.

To the Editor of the London Journal.

DEAR SIR,—I dare say you are well aware that few things are more wondered at than dreams; and, perhaps, few things are less understood. This, perhaps, arises from the fact, that, when the state of sleep is considered at all, it is considered in its extreme opposition to our state when awake. It is not considered, that there are as many intermediate states as there are hues in the rainbow, and that these states imperceptibly dissolve into each other in somewhat the same manner. There is fatigue, languor, drowsiness, the dozing state, and a thousand other intermediate states between each of these, of which it would be as difficult to give a catalogue as it would be to delineate every arc in a circle. There is no great difference between fatigue and languor: excessive languor is a species of drowsiness, excessive drowsiness is scarcely distinguishable from the dozing state, and the extreme state of dozing may almost be sleep. If it were questioned of one or any of these intermediate states, no one would be disposed to ascribe anything remarkable to them. Why, then, should we impute anything strange or uncommon to one state which we decidedly refused to impute to another—which, if it possesses any difference at all, it is a difference which is hardly perceptible, and which could not be distinguished by the nicest investigator?

Those who make a point of wondering at sleep, maintain that there is not a continued state of thought during sleep—or, in fact, that there is no thought at all; but that, as soon as we lie down and sleep commences, thought at that instant ceases; and that our sleep is varied only by occasional inspirations, which they call dreams. Others maintain that dreams are merely an excited and exuberant imagination, but deny that we are continually imagining while asleep. "We do not believe," say they, "that we are continually thinking while asleep, because we do not remember our thoughts." So I must conclude, that because, at the end of six or seven hours, I do not remember my thoughts during that time, that, therefore, I have not thought at all. How many days pass away, and we, upon the revival of them, do not remember a single thought which has occupied our minds during that time! Surely then, if, upon the revival of days, we cannot remember a single

thought, it is not very wonderful that we should not be able to recall to memory every idea that has passed in our minds during six or seven hours. If, then, from the non-remembrance of our thoughts during sleep, we conclude that we do not think at all, we must follow up the conclusion by affirming that only those thoughts have really existed (both when asleep and awake) which we can recall to memory. The nature of our thoughts during sleep is characterized by their peculiar vividness and intensity. The vigour of the intellectual faculties, in this instance, may be accounted for by the repose of the *sensational* faculties; since it is an established principle of the mind, that, when one or more faculties cease their exertion, the remaining faculties assume additional strength. The man who exerts his arms, body, and feet at the same time, must employ less strength in each of those limbs than he would do were all the others at rest. What is true, in this instance, in our physical nature, is true also in our mental. When you wish to recall the countenance of a friend, you involuntarily close your eyes. If then, upon the cessation of one of the *sensational* faculties, the imagination is increased, how much more must it be increased upon the repose of all those faculties! If, upon the cessation of sight, our fancy is more vivid, how much more vivid must it be when not only sight, but the sensations of touch, taste, smelling, and hearing cease their operations! The mind is somewhat like a masquerade. When the room is full of company, the separate characters are unable to exhibit themselves to advantage; but remove half of those characters, and the remainder will be able to sport about with grace and dexterity. This vividness of the imagination during sleep is modified by the individual propensities—the miser dreams of his gold, the mother of her darling; by circumstantial casualties, by the passions which influence us—such as hope, fear, remorse. Sometimes we regard the past, sometimes the future, sometimes neither; but our mind is engaged in what is termed castle-building, in which we suppose ourselves placed in circumstances in which we should hope or fear to be placed.

There is yet one thing in the phenomenon of sleep worthy of notice, and that is, the confusion of our thoughts. For instance, I dream that I visit my friend; but, at the same time, fancy myself surrounded by my own children, my own chattels, and my own pleasure-grounds. Or I fancy that I am attacked by a robber; and yet, at the same time, fancy he is a well-known friend. The confusion, in this instance, I consider may be accounted for, by supposing that the idea of the robber first arises in my mind; and the idea of my friend, to whom I should always fly in distress, so rapidly succeeds, that the idea of the robber has not time to die away before the idea of my friend succeeds, and consequently the two are blended together. The same remark may be applied to the first instance, and, I consider, to all other instances of the kind. If a wheel is caused slowly to revolve, each spoke may be distinctly perceived as it describes its circle; but increase its motion to rapidity, and you will not be able to see whether there are four, eight, or sixteen spokes—but the whole will be blended in one confused and indistinct whirl, to which the confusion of thoughts alluded to is somewhat similar. Thus, then, it is my opinion that there is a continued state of thought during sleep; that the vividness of that thought may be accounted for by the cessation of the *sensational* faculties, and their occasional confusion by their rapidity.

And thus I have endeavoured to give an outline of my thoughts upon a subject which well deserves a more lengthened attention. If they are incorrect, the fact that I have read no work, and have had no help whatever on the subject, may afford some excuse for

Yours, Sir,

AN INQUIRER.

THE WEEK.

PERSONAL PORTRAITS OF EMINENT MEN.

CHARLES IX, OF ST BARTHOLOMEW NOTORITY.

(From 'Rauwer's Historical Documents'.)

He was liberal to everyone, and was often heard to say, "A King must be ready in giving, for nations are like rivers, which pour down their waters continually to the ocean, that is, the Treasury." His bodily exercises consisted in jumping, tennis, breaking or shoeing horses, or in driving them, which he understood well, even with four-in-hand. Besides these, he forged weapons, cast cannons, fished and hunted. He was especially, from his childhood, addicted to the chase, even to phrenzy. Day and night he wandered about the forests, careless of food or rest, as long as he could indulge his passion. Upon the paraphernalia of the chase, the resorts and haunts of the game, and the manner of taking every sort, he has written a book. This daily pursuit of beasts made him cruel towards them, but not towards men.* He killed horses with his own hand, and if he met with asses he frequently struck off their heads, and paid their value to the owners. He killed swine in the presence of his courtiers, and dabbled with bloody hands in their entrails, like a common butcher's man. As he, on one occasion, fell in this fashion upon a mule of Lausac's, who was a favourite of the courtier's, Lausac cried out, "Whence has this feud arisen between my mule and the most Christian King?"

Of all arts he practised music by preference, cultivated singers, in particular an eunuch, surnamed Le Roi, and sung himself with a strong and melodious voice, in the choir. He also gave to musicians considerable ecclesiastical situations.

Marie Touchet, the beautiful daughter of an apothecary in Orleans, was much beloved by him, and bore him two sons. When a picture was shown her of the new Queen of France, Elizabeth (daughter of Maximilian II), she is said to have laughed, and to have said, "Germany does not alarm me."

When a child he studied grammar, and occupied himself with sciences, but as soon as he was King, he laid aside these pursuits as unworthy of a sovereign; for, in the judgment of the courtiers, it is praiseworthy to be ignorant. Yet he loved poetry, and himself composed poems in the French tongue. Among the authors of Latin poetry he was partial to Dorat; among those of French, to Ronsard and Baif; when they read their poems to him he listened with great attention, and gave them presents, but not large ones, in order that, from want of money, they might return soon, and bring something new. The poets he said, are like good horses, which we must feed, but not fatten.

* "Hec quotidiana belluarum insectatio sanguineum eum reddebat in feras, non in homines." M. Rauwer has considered this passage so much at variance with history, that he has altered the sense in his translation, by supposing that the word *non* had been falsely inserted. I venture, with much deference, to doubt whether the passage should not be considered as correctly given. The behaviour of Charles IX, in the affair of St Bartholomew, has been recorded to his infamy; but it must be remembered that he was young, and the puppet of others; and it is also recorded of him, that he looked back with horror and repentance to his conduct on that occasion. Such feelings could hardly have been the work of such spiritual advisers as he was likely to have about him, and may be fairly presumed to have been the natural working of a nature not originally cruel.—(Translator's Note.)—(There was a mixture of natures undoubtedly in Charles; and he deserves all the excuses that can be found for him in a bad and despotic education, and the tendency which it superinduces to all sorts of madness. But excessive cruelty, or thoughtlessness, or whatever it may be called, towards the brute creation is, to say the least of it, not likely to dispose a man to consideration for his other fellow-creatures. The habit is dangerous, and likely to turn the scale to their disadvantage, especially the love of excitement is stimulated by circumstances and fancied right or necessity. Butchers are wisely forbidden to be upon juries; not because they are not as good as other men by nature, and often as truly kind, but because the habit of taking away the lives of sheep and oxen inures them of necessity to the sight of blood and violence, and mortal pangs. Poor King Charles, we see, had been suffered to grow up into an amateur pork-butcher! and of the most disgusting description! Who is to wonder what such princes become?—Ed.]

He ate little, and for his health's sake drank only water, or hyposas, made of water, sugar, and cinnamon. He slept very little, and before midnight was generally on horseback, putting the hounds in motion, or about something. His sickness was increased by the fear of the machinations of his brother Francis and his nephew Henry, as well as by the suspicion that he was wasting away by slow poison, or magical contrivances. On this ground two Italian soothsayers, Momus and Kormus, were cast into prison.

Charles was tall, but stooped much. His complexion was pale, of the colour of box-wood, a hook nose, wry neck, thin limbs. He was of over-hasty disposition, impatient, wrathful, fierce, but not cruel; a good memory, a master of dissimulation, when he chose; voluptuous, but not to excess; eloquent, and of sharp judgment. Perjury seemed to him nothing but a figure of speech, and no crime; he, therefore, violated his faith as often as it seemed to his profit to do so.

MACKAREL FISHERY.

(From 'Yarrell's History of British Fishes'.)

IN May 1707, the first Brighton boat-load of mackarel sold at Billingsgate for forty guineas per hundred,—seven shillings each, reckoning six score to a hundred; the highest price ever known at that market. The next boat-load produced but thirteen guineas per hundred. Mackarel was so plentiful at Dover in 1808, that they were sold sixty for a shilling. At Brighton, in June of the same year, the shoal of mackarel was so great, that one of the boats had the meshes of her nets so completely occupied by them, that it was impossible to drag them in; the fish and nets, therefore, in the end, sunk together; the fishermen thereby sustaining a loss of nearly sixty pounds, exclusive of what the cargo, could it have been got into the boat, would, have produced. The success of the fishery in 1821 was beyond all precedent. The value of the catch of sixteen boats, from Lowestoffe, on the 30th of June, amounted to 5252*l.*; and it is supposed that there was no less an amount than 14,000*l.* altogether realized by the owners and men concerned in the fishery of the Suffolk coast.* In March 1833, on a Sunday, four 'Hastings' boats brought on shore ten thousand eight hundred mackarel; and the next day, two boats brought seven thousand fish. Early in the month of February, 1834, one boat's crew from Hastings, cleared 100*l.* for the fish caught in one night; and a large quantity of very fine mackarel appeared in the London market in the second week of the same month. They were cried through the streets of London three for a shilling on the 14th and 22nd of March 1834, and had then been plentiful for a month. The boats engaged in fishing are usually attended by other fast-sailing vessels, which are sent away with the fish taken. From some situations, these vessels sail away direct for the London market; at others, they make for the nearest point from which they can obtain land-carriage for their fish. From Hastings and other fishing towns on the 'Sussex coast the fish are brought to London by vans, which travel up during the night.

The common mode of fishing for mackarel, and the way in which the greatest numbers are taken, is by drift-nets. The drift-net is twenty feet deep, by one hundred and twenty feet long; well corked at the top, but without lead at the bottom. They are of small fine twine, which is tanned of a reddish brown colour, to preserve it from the action of the sea-water; and it is thereby rendered much more durable. The size of the mesh about two and a half inches or rather larger. Twelve, fifteen, and sometimes eighteen of these nets are attached lengthways, by tying along a thick rope, called the drift-

rope, and at the ends of each net, to each other. When arranged for depositing in the sea, a large buoy attached to the end of the drift-rope is thrown overboard, the vessel is put before the wind, and, as she sails along, the rope with the nets thus attached is passed over the stern into the water till the whole of the nets are run out. The net thus deposited hangs suspended in the water perpendicularly twenty feet deep from the drift-rope, and extending from three-quarters of a mile, or even a mile and a half, depending on the number of nets belonging to the party or company engaged in fishing together. When the whole of the nets are thus handed out, the drift-rope is shifted from the stern to the bow of the vessel, and she rides by it as if at anchor. The benefit gained by the boat's hanging at the end of the drift-rope is, that the net is kept strained in a straight line, which, without this pull upon it, would not be the case. The nets are shot in the evening, and sometimes hauled once during the night, at others allowed to remain in the water all night. The fish, roving in the dark through the water, hang in the meshes of the net, which are large enough to admit them beyond the gill-covers and pectoral fins, but not large enough to allow the thickest part of the body to pass through. In the morning early, preparations are made for hauling the nets. A capstan on the deck is manned, about which two turns of the drift-rope are taken. One man stands forward to untie the upper edge of each net from the drift-rope, which is called casting off the lashings; others hand in the net with the fish caught, to which one side of the vessel is devoted; the other side is occupied by the drift-rope, which is wound in by the men at the capstan. The whole of the net in, and the fish secured, the vessel runs back into harbour with her fish; or, depositing them on board some other boat in company, that carries for the party to the nearest market, the fishing vessel remains at sea for the next night's operation.

The name (mackarel) is said to be derived from the Latin *macularius*, in allusion to its spotted appearance; and it is called in most of the countries of Europe by terms that have reference to its variegated and chequered appearance.

COWSLIPPING. MAY-DAY.

(By the Author of 'May Flowers'.)

HAIL to thee, thou most beautiful of months! thou girl-hood of the year! We love thee for thy budding beauties, for the glad smile that thou throwest over garden and woodland and meadow—we love thee for the "merry minstrelsy" which greeteth thee from the "restless cuckoo" and the "twittering swallow"—we love thee for thy bright skies and balmy breezes; but more than all we love thee for the remembrances thou bringest to us of our early school-days—the by far brightest part of our earthly career. It was on May-day that we always sallied out from school to go "cowslipping," to pull the bright golden flowers, for the purpose of making wine, for our kind-hearted school-mistress. I remember well how anxiously the first of May was looked for; for weeks before that joyful advent, our whole conversation in and out of school-hours turned upon the merry "cowslipping;" and it certainly was a merry time, though not characterised by that obstreperous merriment which usually distinguishes the amusements of boyhood. No! it was merry as the first holiday of the year, as the first day we went out together; it seemed like the promise of other days of summer beauty—it whispered to us of hope, and it seemed to some of us—certainly to me—as emblematical of the glorious beauty of a fadeless world.

Well then, early on the May morning, while yet the dew was sparkling in the bright beams of the sun, while yet the sky-lark was "pouring its full heart" in its matin song to heaven, did we joyous creatures commence our ramble "o'er hill and dale." Gentle Reader! the fields, the hedge-sides, and the woodland walks we traversed were those that the "pious Cowper" has made dear to many of you in his 'Task'; they were those in the neighbourhood

of Olney; we went either over the meadows to Clifton Hill, or across the fields by the "peasant's road" to the beautiful park of Weston Underwood. We were not satisfied, as some would have been, with gathering sufficient, we were anxious that we should go home as the bearers of plenty, and for this purpose the great clothes-basket was put into requisition, two taking it by turns to be the flower bearers. The largest cowslips we used to think grew under the hedges and in the spinnies, but those growing in the open field, with the bright sun full upon them, were those that we considered sweetest, and were told made the best wine. What emulation was there to be the quickest gatherer of the best and finest flowers! I remember when by chance we once came upon a sunny bank of land in a fallow field that we were crossing, what a host of these nodding beauties were congregated together, and what a scramble, and yet what fearful care of treading upon them! for we held it as unworthy of us to tread one of them down if we could help it; and then the display of our different handsful when we had finished, and the delighted feeling of those whose bunch was the largest; never did successful card-player feel more delight—never could he feel that pure unalloyed delight—that one of us felt at displaying "a good hand;" and yet there were no bickerings—no envious feelings towards the successful. We came out to be happy, and we were so, and joined in the delight of the victors. Miles have we traversed, sometimes running, sometimes stooping, always joyful and good-tempered; and when our basket had become full as it would hold, if we had any sorrow, it was that our pleasant task had ended.

But on our arrival home a repast awaited us of plum-cake, and what else do you think? why of cowslip wine, wine made from the very cowslips that the year before we had gathered; and how pleasant the talk and prattle about our last year's excursion—of poor Joe Brooks's fall into the ditch that was overgrown by thick grass, near Dingleberry-wood; and the charge we made upon a wasp's nest, and how we left them victors; and how some of us had grown since then, and how one of our playfellows of that day, who was dear to us as a brother, and gentle and affectionate as a brother should be, was not amongst our number now, but had departed with the beauty of the departed year; and then the hopes and the expectations and the wonderings as to our next May-day's excursion; and then the separation in the evening, and the pleasant dreams we had of "cowslipping." Since a child, I have been a lover of cowslip wine; the mystery of that love is not in the sweetness or flavour of the cowslip, but in the remembrance that ever comes with it of the days when I was a gatherer of cowslips.

[Youthful spirits are certainly the best of all wines; and pleasant recollections are wine; and good "articles" are wine. Yet cowslip wine is good for its own sake too. Also, for performing the part of a harmless opiate:—

"If your point be rest,
Lettuce and cowslip wine; *probatum est.*"

POPE.

Our Correspondent also might have given us a beautiful passage from Shakespeare, relative to cowslips. The sweet wife Imogen (Shakespeare excels in painting sweet wives) has—

"On her left breast
A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
I' the bottom of a cowslip."

Iachimo notes it down in the stealthy list which he had no right to make; otherwise, we should not have it; so we are beholden to him for one good turn, at all events. Shakespeare could not record a wrong, without making it yield us something beautiful.

There is, or used to be, an abundance of cowslips in a meadow at the back of Hendon Church, after passing the archway, through which you go into the fields in that quarter. We mention this for the sake of the lovers of flowers, the cowslip not being commonly met with nearer London.—E.S.]

* In an interesting and useful sketch of the 'Natural History of Yarmouth and its Neighbourhood,' by C. and T. Paget, it is stated, at page 16, that, in 1823, one hundred and forty-two lasts of Mackarel were taken there. A last is ten thousand.

CHARACTERS OF SHAKSPEARE'S PLAYS.

BY WILLIAM HAZLITT.

NO. XVII.—RICHARD II.

RICHARD II. is a play little known compared with Richard III., which last is a play that every un-fledged candidate for theatrical fame chooses to strut and fret his hour upon the stage in; yet we confess that we prefer the nature and feeling of the one to the noise and bustle of the other; at least, as we are so often forced to see it acted. In Richard II., the weakness of the king leaves us leisure to take a greater interest in the misfortunes of the man. After the first act, in which the arbitrariness of his behaviour only proves his want of resolution, we see him staggering under the unlooked-for blows of fortune, bewailing his loss of kingly power, not preventing it, sinking under the aspiring genius of Bolingbroke, his authority trampled on, his hopes failing him, and his pride crushed and broken down under insults and injuries, which his own misconduct had provoked, but which he has not courage or manliness to resent. The change of tone and behaviour in the two competitors for the throne according to their change of fortune, from the capricious sentence of banishment passed by Richard upon Bolingbroke, the suppliant offers and modest pretensions of the latter on his return, to the high and haughty tone with which he accepts Richard's resignation of the crown after the loss of all his power, the use which he makes of the deposed king to grace his triumphal progress through the streets of London, and the final intimation of his wish for his death, which immediately finds a servile executioner, is marked throughout with complete effect and without the slightest appearance of effort. The steps by which Bolingbroke mounts the throne are those by which Richard sinks into the grave. We feel neither respect nor love for the deposed monarch; for he is as wanting in energy as in principle: but we pity him, for he pities himself. His heart is by no means hardened against himself, but bleeds afresh at every new stroke of mischance, and his sensibility, absorbed in his own person, and unused to misfortune, is not only tenderly alive to its own sufferings, but without the fortitude to bear them. He is, however, human in his distresses; for to feel pain, and sorrow, weakness, disappointment, remorse and anguish, is the lot of humanity, and we sympathize with him accordingly. The sufferings of the man make us forget that he ever was a king.

The right assumed by sovereign power to trifle at its will with the happiness of others as a matter of course, or to remit its exercise as a matter of favour, is strikingly shown in the sentence of banishment so unjustly pronounced on Bolingbroke and Mowbray, and in what Bolingbroke says when four years of his banishment are taken off, with as little reason:—

"How long a time lies in one little word?

Four lagging winters and four wanton springs
End in a word: such is the breath of kings."

A more affecting image of the loneliness of a state of exile can hardly be given than by what Bolingbroke afterwards observes of his having "sighed his English breath in foreign clouds;" or than that conveyed in Mowbray's complaint at being banished for life.—

"The language I have learned these forty years,

My native English, now I must forego:

And now my tongue's use is to me no more

Than an unstringed viol or a harp,

Or like a cunning instrument cas'd up,

Or being open, put into his hands

That knows no touch to tune the harmony.

I am too old to fawn upon a nurse,

Too far in years to be a pupil now."

How very beautiful is all this, and at the same time how very English too!

Richard II. may be considered the first of that series of English historical plays, in which "is hung the armour of the invincible knights of old," in which their hearts seem to strike against their coats of mail,

where their blood tingles for the fight, and words are but the harbingers of blows. Of this state of accomplished barbarism the appeal of Bolingbroke and Mowbray is an admirable specimen. Another of these "keen encounters of their wits," which serve to whet the talkers' swords, is where Aumerle answers in the presence of Bolingbroke to the charge which Bagot brings against him of being an accessory in Gloster's death:—

"FITZWATER. If that thy valour stand on sympathies,

There is my gage, Aumerle, in gage to thine;
By that fair sun that shows me where thou stand'st
I heard thee say, and vauntingly thou spak'st it,
That thou wert cause of noble Gloster's death.
If thou deny'st it twenty times thou liest,
And I will turn thy falsehood to thy heart
Where it was forged, with my rapier's point.

AUMERLE. Thou dar'st not, coward, live to see the day.

FITZWATER. Now, by my soul, I would it were this hour.

AUMERLE. Fitzwater, thou art damn'd to hell for this.

PERCY. Aumerle, thou liest; his honour is as true,

In this appeal, as thou art all unjust;
And that thou art so, there I throw my gage
To prove it on thee, to th' extremest point
Of mortal breathing. Seize it, if thou dar'st.

AUMERLE. And if I do not, may my hands rot off,
And never brandish more revengeful steel
Over the glittering helmet of my foe.
Who sets me else? By heav'n, I'll throw at all.
I have a thousand spirits in my breast,
To answer twenty thousand such as you.

SURRY. My lord Fitzwater, I remember well
The very time Aumerle and you did talk.

FITZWATER. My lord, 'tis true: you were in presence then:

And you can witness with me, this is true.

SURRY. As false, by heav'n, as heav'n itself is true.

FITZWATER. Surry, thou liest.

SURRY. Dishonourable boy,
That lie shall lie so heavy on thy sword,
That it shall render vengeance and revenge,
Till thou the lie-giver and that lie rest
In earth as quiet as thy father's skull.
In proof whereof, there is mine honour's pawn:
Engage it to the trial, if thou dar'st.

FITZWATER. How fondly dost thou spur a forward horse:

If I dare eat or drink or breathe or live,
I dare meet Surry in a wilderness,
And spit upon him, whilst I say he lies.
And lies, and lies: there is my bond of faith,
To tie thee to thy strong correction.
As I do hope to thrive in this new world,
Aumerle is guilty of my true appeal."

The truth is, that there is neither truth nor honour in all these noble persons; they answer words with words, as they do blows with blows, in mere self defence: nor have they any principle whatever but that of courage in maintaining any wrong they dare commit, or any falsehood which they find it useful to assert. How different were these noble knights and "barons bold" from their more refined descendants in the present day, who, instead of deciding questions by brute force, refer everything to convenience, fashion, and good breeding! In point of any abstract love of truth or justice, they are just the same now that they were then.

The characters of Old John of Gaunt and of his brother York, uncles to the King, the one stern and foreboding, the other honest, good-natured, doing all for the best, and therefore doing nothing, are well kept up. The speech of the former, in praise of England, is one of the most eloquent that ever was penned. We should perhaps hardly be disposed to feed the pampered egotism of our countrymen by quoting this description, were it not that the conclusion of it (which looks prophetic) may qualify any improper degree of exultation.

"This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This earth of Majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-Paradise,
This fortress built by nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall
(Or as a moat defensive to a house)
Against the envy of less happy lands:
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Fear'd for their breed and famous for their birth,
Renowned for their deeds, as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son;
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leas'd out (I die pronouncing it)
Like to a tenement or pelling farm.
England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious surge
Of wat'ry Neptune, is bound in with shame,
With inky-blots and rotten parchment bonds.
That England, that was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself."

The character of Bolingbroke, afterwards Henry IV., is drawn with a masterly hand:—patient, for occasion, and then steadily availing himself of it, seeing his advantage afar off, but only seizing on it when he has it within his reach, humble, crafty, bold, and aspiring, encroaching by regular but slow degrees, building power on opinion, and cementing opinion by power. His disposition is first unfolded by Richard himself, who however is too self-willed and secure to make a proper use of his knowledge.

"Ourself and Bushy, Bagot here and Green,
Observed his courtship of the common people:
How he did seem to dive into their hearts,
With humble and familiar courtesy,
What reverence he did throw away on slaves;
Wooping poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles,
And patient under-bearing of his fortune,
As 'twere to banish their affections with him.
Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench;
A brace of draymen bid God speed him well,
And had the tribute of his supple knee,
With thanks my countrymen, my loving friends:
As were our England in reversion his,
And he our subjects' next degree in hope."

Afterwards, he gives his own character to Percy, in these words:—

"I thank thee, gentle Percy, and be sure
I count myself in nothing else so happy,
As in a soul rememb'ring my good friends;
And as my fortune ripens with my love,
It shall be still thy true love's recompense."

We know how he afterwards kept his promise. His bold assertion of his own rights, his pretended submission to the king, and the ascendancy which he tacitly assumes over him without openly claiming it, as soon as he has him in his power, are characteristic traits of this ambitious and politic usurper. But the part of Richard himself gives the chief interest to the play. His folly, his vices, his misfortunes, his reluctance to part with the crown, his fear to keep it, his weak and womanish regrets, his starting tears, his fits of hectic passion, his smothered majesty, pass in succession before us, and make a picture as natural as it is affecting. Among the most striking touches of pathos are his wish "Oh that I were a mockery king of snow to melt away before the sun of Bolingbroke," and the incident of the poor groom who comes to visit him in prison, and tells him how "it yearned his heart that Bolingbroke upon his coronation day rode on Roan Barbary." We shall have occasion to return hereafter to the character of Richard II. in speaking of Henry VI. There is only one passage more, the description of his entrance into London with Bolingbroke, which we should like to quote here, if it had not been so used and worn out, so thumb'd and got

by rote, so praised and painted; but its beauty surmounts all these considerations.

"DUCHESS. My lord, you told me you would tell the rest,

When weeping made you break the story off
Of our two cousins coming into London.

YORK. Where did I leave?

DUCHESS. At that sad stop, my lord,
Where rude misgovern'd hands, from window tops,
Threw dust and rubbish on king Richard's head.

YORK. Then, as I said, the duke, great Bolingbroke,

Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed,
Which his aspiring rider seem'd to know,
With slow, but stately pace, kept on his course,
While all tongues cried—God save thee, Bolingbroke!

You would have thought the very windows spake,
So many greedy looks of young and old
Through casements darted their desiring eyes
Upon his visage; and that all the walls,
With painted imagery, had said at once—
Jesu preserve thee! welcome, Bolingbroke!
Whilst he, from one side to the other turning,
Bare-headed, lower than his proud steed's neck,
Bespoke them thus—I thank you, countrymen:
And thus still doing thus he pass'd along.

DUCHESS. Alas, poor Richard! where rides he
the while?

YORK. As in a theatre, the eyes of men,
After a well-grac'd actor leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him that enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious:
Even so or with much more contempt, men's eyes
Did seowl on Richard; no man cried God save him!

No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home:
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head!
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off—
His face still combating with tears and smiles,
The badges of his grief and patience—
That had not God, for some strong purpose, steel'd
The hearts of men, they must perceive have melted.
And barbarism itself have pitied him."

FINE ARTS.

The British Atlas. By J. and C. Walker. Part II, Kent and Dorset. Longman and Co.
We expressed our admiration of the work's getting-up on its first appearance; and, in speaking of Part II, must repeat what we said of Part I; adding, however, that the price is surprisingly moderate.

MUSIC.

Mr J. D. Humphreys' Concert, Assembly Rooms, Kensington.

MR HUMPHREYS, assisted by an orchestra composed principally of his fellow pupils of the Royal Academy of Music, got up an unpretending, but very nice concert. The programme included many popular pieces, and yet chiefly consisted of good music, two points requiring some nicety of judgment to unite. E. Seguin sang a duet with his wife, 'Come frenar,' and a song, 'Non piu andrai,' which he much injured by substituting a poor tune of his own, in place of the original melody, at the commencement. It was unworthy the rest of his singing. Mr Patey played a concerto on the violin, by De Beriot, more calculated to show off the skill of the performer than the composer's invention. The sextetto, 'Sola, sola,' from the *Don Giovanni*, was very excellently sung by Misses Gooch, Dickens, and Birch, and Messrs Barnett, W. Seguin, and Hullah; particularly the solo, in which Leporello (W. Seguin) begs for his life. Mr Humphreys sang a ballad of Weber's, 'We never meet again,' with great taste and feeling, accompanying himself on the pianoforte. He obtained a most unanimous encore; indeed, the ballad appeared the favourite of the morning. The rest of the music was, for the most part, well done; we must make an exception of Mr Lejeune's 'Sor-

gete,' in which common-place and bravado supplied the place of dignity and energy. Why will he deform everything he does with a profusion of uncouth attempts at execution? This was apparent in the duet also, 'Dunque io son,' though that was much better in other respects. The whole orchestra, instrumental and vocal, deserve the highest commendation, for the pains-taking, and unanimity with which they performed together. The band, however, might have allowed us to discover for ourselves how well they performed, and not have insisted on making so prominent a display as sometimes to drown the singers. The room was very full, and the natives of this pleasant suburb seemed highly delighted with their morning's treat.

TO —

LADY! I love thee, as the stars of night

Love distantly the moon, when queenly she
Sheds o'er the dome of Heaven her holy light,
Illustring earth, purpling the silver sea!

Lady! I love thee with the poet's love

Of feeling sigh'd to song; so the lorn bird

Of eve, if yearning toward her native grove,

Breaks into saddest music. Thou hast stirr'd

The sleeping sources of my minstrel art

With love that clasps no hope of kindredhood!

With pride that seeks not praise—with joy of heart

Nigh link'd to sorrow. Who like me hath woo'd,

Consenting to his fate? which binds him here

To love—admire—adore—and still despair!

J. H.

London, May 1835.

TABLE TALK.

A BAKER POET.

France as well as England has had her poets in humble life; of one of the most remarkable of whom a letter from Chambéry gives the following notice:—
"An interesting guest, the baker and poet, Reboul, has recently visited Chambéry; he is about thirty-eight years of age, a native of the south of France, and is well known to Charles Nodier, Victor Hugo, Lamartine, and other celebrated men. His recitation of verses in the accent and full-sounding dialect of the south, has a peculiar and pleasing effect. His best poems have been composed in his bakehouse, and although he has been repeatedly entreated to abandon his trade, leave Nismes, and reside at Paris, yet he has always rejected these proposals. He is devotedly attached to his native town, and to the mode of life, manners, nature, and climate of his provincial country. His dwelling is very simple; butts of meal obstruct the passage to his little chamber behind the oven. Here dwells, not Reboul the baker, but Reboul the poet. Drawings, sent to him by the artists themselves, ornament the walls; books, presented by their authors, lie upon the table; and the cards of all the eminent men of the department are stuck against a small looking-glass; his bed occupies one corner of the apartment. The occasion of his visit to Chambéry was to buy meal. His presence in our town being discovered by the secretary of the Academy of Arts, he received more visits in his humble lodging than were perhaps agreeable to him."
—*Printing Machine.*

ADVANTAGES OF READING.

A truth which dawns upon our own minds becomes doubly true when we find that it has enlightened the minds of others, who have left us bright records of its usefulness and beauty; and an error which we perceive in ourselves is far more startling in its effect upon us, when we find that it has been detected by some thoughtful man who lived ages ago, and who has forcibly shown, by his own experience, its fatal tendencies, and who has distinctly warned mankind against its delusive promises. What we see and feel ourselves becomes thus more clearly and distinctly manifest to us; and no one who is true to himself, however false the world

around may prove to him, will blind himself to his own consciousness and to the experience and teachings of others, of the beauty of knowledge, the safety and the imperishable dignity and glory of virtue, the deformity of vice, and the dangers and unworthiness of ignorance. We often meet, too, with some happy expressions in books, which flash at once new light upon our souls; and the simplicity with which some old truth is thus enforced incorporates it ever after as a part of our intellect and feelings; so that, if the infirmities of our nature, or the accidents of our lives, ever lead us to the hazard of acting in contradiction to it, some mysterious link in association recalls to us the happy sentiment in the very words in which it was uttered; and the delight with which we first read it steals anew over us, and we turn with disgust from the thoughts or the actions that are opposed to its salutary instruction.—*From an Address delivered at the opening of the Reading Room in Grenville street, Brunswick square, by Francis Boott, M.D.*

ROUNDNESS OF THE HUMAN CONFIGURATION.

Viewing the human body as a complicated whole, as a congeries of organs made up of various combinations of simple tissues, it may be observed, in reference to its external configuration, that it is rounded. This rounded form is principally owing to the large proportion of fluids which enter into its composition. The roundness of the face, limbs, and entire surface of the child, are in striking contrast to the unequal and irregular surface of the old man, whose humours are comparatively very much smaller in quantity.—*Dr Southwood Smith's 'Philosophy of Health.'*

LAUGHTER.

Man is the only animal with the powers of laughing, a privilege which was not bestowed upon him for nothing. Let us then laugh while we may, no matter how broad the laugh may be, short of a lock-jaw, and despite of what the poet says about "the loud laugh that speaks the vacant mind." The mind should occasionally be vacant as the land should sometimes lie fallow; and for precisely the same reason.—*The Melange; by Egerton Smith.*

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. was received, and is right; as will be seen; though there is a want of art and probability in the work, which will prevent the Author's real talents from being duly appreciated by the public.

CORLENS-SENEX will find, by and by, that we have not overlooked his just grounds of objection; though we should have thought we had already left none for mistake on that point.

We will endeavour to answer Z.'s question more at length; but need he to doubt what to do, after what has been said?

We are much mistaken, if we have not already intimated our opinion respecting the 'Lines to a First Floor next the Sky,' though we cannot call to mind the reason for their omission. It was nothing discreditable to the writer or his general abilities.

Mr K. has our best thanks and respects. The work in question will receive the proper attention.

An answer respecting 'Franconian Tales' next week.

A Notice of the Royal Academy Exhibition, and 'Hints for Table Talk,' are unavoidably postponed till next week.

There are many Correspondents remaining, whose communications we would fain publish; but if we do not, we must beg them to construe us in kindness; particularly as, in accordance with what we stated at the beginning of the year, we are about to make some further additions to the regular stock-matter of the Journal, which will not leave us our usual room for contributions.

LONDON: Published by H. HODDER, Pall Mall East, and supplied to Country Agents by C. KNIGHT, Ludgate-street.

From the Steam-Press of C. & W. REYNELL, Little, Poultry-arch.

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